

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MADRID 07156 220745Z

65

ACTION EUR-12

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AMEMBASSY ANKARA

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AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

USCINCEUR

USNMR SHAPE

CINCLANT

CINCUSNAVEUR

CINCUSAFE

USDOCOSOUTH

CINCUSAREUR

USDELMC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 7156

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, NATO, SP

SUBJECT: SPAIN AND NATO--SOME STRAWS IN THE WIND

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PAGE 02 MADRID 07156 220745Z

SUMMARY: GIVEN THE LACK OF CLEAR POLICY DIRECTION FROM THE TOP, IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT WE ARE WITNESSING CONSIDERABLE SHUFFLING BY SPANISH OFFICIALS ON ISSUES HAVING TO DO WITH A CLOSER SPANISH TIE TO NATO. END SUMMARY.

1. SOME MADRID INSIGHTS ON THE SPAIN-NATO ISSUE HAVE BEEN PROVIDED BY OUR RECENT CONSULTATIONS WITH FOREIGN MINISTRY AND MILITARY OFFICIALS REGARDING THE AGENDAS FOR THE FIRST SESSIONS ON OCT 1 OF THE US-SPANISH COUNCIL AND THE JOINT MILITARY COMMITTEE. THESE CAN BE SUMMARIZED AS FOLLOWS:

(A) THERE IS NO SPANISH GOVT POLICY ON THIS MATTER AND NO PROSPECT OF THERE BEING ONE SOON (OUR OWN PROJECTION IS AT LEAST NOT UNTIL AFTER PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS EXCEPT IN THE HIGHLY UNLIKELY EVENT THAT MEMBERSHIP IN NATO SHOULD BECOME A REAL QUESTION SOONER).

(B) THE JOCKEYING THAT IS NOW GOING ON AMONG INTERESTED GOS OFFICIALS PLACES IN CONTRAST SOME OF THOSE WHO SEE A SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SUCCESSFUL DOMESTIC REFORM AND CLOSER ASSOCIATION WITH WESTERN EUROPE (E.G., OREJA HIMSELF) AGAINST MORE CONSERVATIVE INTERESTS (PRINCIPALLY BUT HARDLY EXCLUSIVELY MILITARY) WHO WISH TO DELAY DISCUSSING NATO-RELATED ISSUES INCLUDING MEASURES TO DEEPEN CONTACTS WITH ALLIANCE MEMBERS. THE CHIEF OF THE HIGH GENERAL STAFF (VALLESPIN) AND HIS AIDES HAVE MADE CLEAR HE WOULD PREFER FOR NOW NOT TO TALK ABOUT SUCH MATTERS IN WASHINGTON. (SOME OF THE FLAVOR OF THE DIALOGUE AMONG SPANISH OFFICIALS CAN BE TASTED IN MADRID 6993 (DTG 141632Z SEP 76) (NOTAL) WHICH TREATS PREPARATIONS FOR THE OCT 1 MEETINGS.

(C) THERE ARE SOME CONFLICTING SIGNALS FROM WITHIN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY. THE DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR NORTH AMERICAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS (DURAN) APPEARS INCLINED TO ACCOMMODATE THE MILITARY'S DESIRE TO AVOID THE NATO ISSUE AT THE OCT 1 MEETINGS, AND NOT TO PRESS THE MILITARY HARD ON THE PREFERENCE (ALSO EXPRESSED DIRECTLY TO US BY A SOURCE AT THE HIGH GENERAL STAFF) NOT TO ESTABLISH SOON THE COMMISSION CALLED FOR IN THE TREATY TO STUDY THE QUESTION OF CLOSER COORDINATION WITH NATO. AT THE SAME TIME, THE DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR EUROPEAN AND ATLANTIC AFFAIRS (AGUIRRE) URGES THAT WE PRESS FORWARD TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE WITH DISCUSSION OF SHORT-TERM MEASURES TO IMPROVE BILATERAL CONTACTS WITH NATO MEMBERS, ASSISTANCE TO CESEDEN, CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 MADRID 07156 220745Z

AND OTHER DISCREET EFFORTS TO "EDUCATE" THE SPANISH MILITARY ON NATO. HE REPORTS WITH PLEASURE THE PROSPECT FOR A RENEWAL NEXT YEAR OF JOINT SPANISH-BELGIAN MINESWEEPER EXERCIZING AFTER A LONG HIATUS. A DURAN SUBORDINATE, THE PROSPECTIVE SPANISH CO-DIRECTOR OF THE TREATY-CREATED PERMANENT SECRETARIAT (CUERVO) TELLS US IT WAS NO ACCIDENT THAT LED FOREIGN MINISTER OREJA TO PASS DIRECTLY TO HIM FOR STAFFING THE ILLUSTRATIVE LIST OF SHORT-TERM BILATERAL NATO-RELATED MEASURES GIVEN OREJA

BY THE AMBASSADOR IN MID-SUMMER. HE BELIEVES THERE TO BE FEW
CONFIRMED ATLANTICISTS IN THE MINISTRY.

(D) NO ONE HERE--ADVOCATES OR OPPONENTS--WANTS THE NATO
MEMBERSHIP ISSUE PRESSED NOW. THE ADVOCATES DO, HOWEVER, FAVOR
OUR PURSUING INITIATIVES SUCH AS SHORT-TERM MEASURES TO
INTENSIFY BILATERAL CONTACTS WITH ALLIANCE MEMBERS AND
ASSISTANCE TO THE SPANISH WAR COLLEGE (CESEDEN) IN BROADENING
ITS STUDY THIS FALL ON SPAIN AND NATO. THEY CAUTION, HOWEVER,
THAT IT IS IMPORTANT TO AVOID INITIATIVES WHICH COULD EMBARRASS
SPAIN BY PRODUCING SLIGHTS OR REJECTION FROM NATO MEMBERS.
WHAT THEY ADVOCATE (CORRECTLY, WE BELIEVE) IS A PATIENT,
DISCREET EDUCATIONAL EFFORT.

2. AN INTERESTING SIDELIGHT: APPARENTLY THE HIGH GENERAL STAFF
AND THE FOREIGN MINISTRY ARE HAVING NO TROUBLE AT ALL AGREEING
THAT THE DIALOGUE IN BRUSSELS BETWEEN HILL-NORTON AND THE
SPANISH AMBASSADOR IS PRODUCING MORE ZEAL THAN REALISM. THEIR
LATEST INITIATIVE, WE ARE TOLD IN CONFIDENCE, IS THAT OF AN
EARLY OFFICIAL VISIT TO NATO HQ. BY THE CHIEF OF THE SPANISH
HIGH GENERAL STAFF, BALLESPIN, AN IDEA WHICH IS REGARDED HERE
AS ONE WELL AHEAD OF ITS TIME. (AGUIRRE DOES SEE SOME MERIT
IN A MUCH LOWER LEVEL VISIT, HOWEVER.)

3. AS FURTHER INTERESTING SIDELIGHT: AGUIRRE, WHO IS PRESSING
FOR CLOSER ATLANTIC TIES FOR SPAIN, APPEARS TO BE THE CHOICE (SOON
TO BE ANNOUNCED) TO BECOME THE NEXT SPANISH AMBASSADOR AT BRUSSELS.
ONE OF HIS MAIN TASKS THERE WILL BE CONTINUING THE DIALOGUE WITH
NATO. A VETERAN ON THE EUROPEAN CIRCUIT, HE ALREADY KNOWS WELL
MANY OF THE PLAYERS.
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